



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

BOBBY JINDAL
GOVERNOR

PEGGY M. HATCH
SECRETARY

For Immediate Release
March 22, 2010

Contact: Rodney Mallett
Telephone: 225-219-3966

EPA recognizes DEQ's efforts to address wastewater concerns with stimulus money

BATON ROUGE – The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality recently received recognition from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for its efforts to distribute stimulus money. DEQ received approximately \$43 million from the EPA as part of the federal stimulus package for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund, also known as CWSRF, to support wastewater improvement and “green infrastructure” projects.

“The department wanted to address wastewater concerns across the state,” said DEQ Secretary Peggy Hatch. “We didn’t take the easy way out. We worked closely with federal and state partners to ensure the money was spent properly and distributed where the state would benefit the most. I’m proud of our staff and it is nice to see EPA recognizes the work DEQ put into using the stimulus money wisely.”

The 55 selected municipalities across 42 parishes do not have to repay their “loan awards” because the DEQ is allowing the recipients to receive a zero percent interest loan with 100 percent principal forgiveness.

In his letter to Secretary Hatch, Miguel Flores, Director of EPA Water Quality Protection Division said “I would like to thank you and your SRF manager and staff for your hard work, dedication and long hours that went into meeting the Feb. 17 deadline for all SRF funds to be under contract or construction.....The benefits of these funds will be felt beyond those 50 communities through the jobs that are created by these projects.”

To ensure the benefits from the stimulus package were felt statewide, the department looked at compliance issues and regional diversity to ensure there would be widespread sewer system improvements across the state. The department also looked at projects where there was a possibility to eliminate any imminent threats to human health or the environment. Financial constraints were also taken under consideration. DEQ considered criteria involving project costs, population served, requested amount, a community’s ability to assume additional debt, and projects that would provide economic recovery.

The federal stimulus package allowed states to keep up to four percent of their award. The DEQ opted to keep none of the allowable administrative set-aside dollars; choosing instead to direct the stimulus funds to support wastewater improvement projects across the state.

The letters from EPA Region 6 Director, Water Quality Protection Division Miguel Flores and from EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson are available at www.deq.louisiana.gov.